LIBRARY

BLOFIELD AND FLEGG RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICERS' OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR

1943

Public Health Department,
Council Office,
ACLE.

May, 1944.

To the Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Rural District Council of Blofield and Flegg.

We beg to present our Annual Report in accordance with the requirements of Circular 2067 as issued by the Ministry of Health.

The geographical position of the District places it as a corridor between two large towns through which in normal times a great movement of population takes place, more especially during the summer months when people are attracted to the Coastal Area, the Rivers and Broads.

During the present emergency certain restrictions have reduced this movement to a minimum, although use has been made of the District as a "Cushion" Area, for the reception of a large number of persons needing accommodation.

The District remains chiefly agricultural in character.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

Area (acres)	74,774
Population (Census 1931)	24,566
Population (Estimated 1943)	28,160
Number of Inhabited Houses (1943)	7,736
Number of Families or separate occupiers	8,500
Rateable Value	£117,091
Produce of 1d. Rate	£462

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS

BIRTHS:	Legitimate) - Total:	505	Males - 263	Females - 242
	Illegitimate) - Total:	36	Males - 19	Females - 17
		541	Males - 282	Females - 259

BIRTH RATE: 19.21

STILLBIRTHS:

	Legitimate) - Total:	16	Males - 10	Females - 6
	Illegitimate) - Total:	1	Males - 0	Females - 1
		17	Males - 10	Females - 7

DEATHS: Total 337 Males - 176 Females - 161

DEATH RATE: 10.9

Number of women dyring in, or in consequence of Child-Birth:-

From Sepsis - 0 From other Sources - 0

Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age per 1,000 Births:-

(Legitimate)	Total:	24	Males	- 13	Females	- 11
Illegitimate)	Total:	2	Males	- 1	Females	- 1
		26	Males	- 14	Females	- 12

Deaths from Measles (alla ages) Males - 0 Females - 0

Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages) Males - 0 Females - 2

Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years) Males - 0 Females - 0

The Births in 1943 were 282 Males and 259 Females. a total of 541, against 309 Males and 269 Females a total of 578 for the year 1942, making a decrease of 37 Births.

The Birth-Rate in 1943 was 19.21 as against an average of 19.93 in the year 1942. The Birth Rate for England and Wales is 16.5

The deaths during the year were less in number and the death-rate 10.9 compares with 13.24 for the year 1942.

There were 20 deaths from Tuberculosis, no deaths from Diphtheria 95 deaths from Heart Disease and 45 deaths from Cancer.

The Infantile Mortality Rate still remains comparatively low, it stands at 48 deaths of children under 1 year per 1,000Births.

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF:

Medical Officers of Health (part time)

W. ROYDEN, M.A., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

J. D. McKELVIE M.D.

Senior Sanitary Inspector

LOUIS F. BECKWITH. C.R.S.I., M.S.I.A., A.F.A.S (Eng)

Sanitary Inspectors.

ARTHUR ARMES. C,S.I.B., M.S.I.A.

Serving in H.M. Forces - H.G.T. BOLTON. C,S.I.B., M.S.I.A.

Departmental Clerk

Miss R.A.M. STONE

Assistant Clerk

Miss M. DAVEY.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

WATER SUPPLIES: A number of Parishes in the Eastern and Western portions are provided with Main Supplies, a number of properties have had a service connected from the Mains during the past year.

Investigations into several doubtful private well supplies have been made and action taken to provide wholesome supplies where it was proved by analyses that these were unfit for domestic purposes.

The large majority of wells in the District are of the shallow type and in consequence liable to pollution, the only reliable method of eliminating this potential danger to public health is to provide main supplies from reliable sources.

The sinking of new shallow wells to replace those polluted should not be encouraged, as it is practically impossible to obtain a wholesome supply.

There is always a possibility of many shallow well supplies in this District becoming polluted especially in those Parishes where waste is disposed of on gardens and other sites near water supplies.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE: The Sewerage Systems covering parts of the Parishes of East Caister and Thorpe St.Andrew have been working satisfactorily during the year. The Pumping Plants on the East Caister System have had minor repairs carried out and under-pinning to the largest settling tanks have been undertaken to prevent subsidence at the Disposal Works.

The question of adequate drainage to a number of Parishes is one calling for consideration at the earliest possible moment; special mention should be made of the area in the vicinity of the Broads which is a source of public water supply.

Owing to extensive building in pre-war days, in certain parts of the District where drainage facilities were not available, many hundreds of cesspools were constructed to take the drainage from private properties, these cesspools are always a potential danger to public health.

New drainage areas were being considered at the outbreak of War and Schemes being prepared, these should be proceeded with as soon as practicable.

The Council's Cesspool Emptying Plant has rendered most valuable service and has been the means of preventing many serious nuisances from overflowing cesspools, the maintenance of this cleansing service has made a real contribution to the safeguarding of public health.

The Post-War period will demand more drainage facilities, if the construction of a large number of cesspools is to be avpided. Certain other small sewerage schemes are of old construction and in some Parishes the disposal arrangements are unsatisfactory; these are always kept under observation to prevent nuisances arising, the continuance of these conditions are not conductive to public health.

SCAVENGING: Some of the Schemes have only been maintained by the utilisation of casual labour, it is essential that labour employed on public cleansing should be retained, in these times of mental and physical strain the need to safeguard public health is of paramount importance stressing the requirements of efficient public cleansing services.

A Scheme of Scavenging has been brought into operation in the Parish of Acle, where the need has been apparent for some time.

There are a number of Parishes in the District where a public cleansing scheme would contribute to a more satisfactory means of disposal of refuse and excreta, and also to the prevention of pollution of shallow well water supplies.

The consideration of public cleansing for the District as a whole . will possibly be undertaken by the Council when improvement schemes are dealt with, it may be found that efficiency can be obtained in a combination with those already serviced.

GENERAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT

The general standard of the health of the District has been maintained in spite of the movement of population throughout the year; the Council's Public Health Officers have contributed in no small manner to this by their prompt action and vigilance.

The Staff of the Public Health Department has been working at full pressure, and we feel we must again record our appreciation to Mr.Beckwith the Senior Sanitary Inspector, and those under his control, for duties ably performed in these difficult times.

The overcrowding of many dwellings has given cause for concern, every effort has been made to provide alternative accommodation for those families living under such conditions.

The continued prevalence of Scabies has received the attention of the Council's Officers throughout the year. These conditions are difficult to control without proper notification, treatment is supplied to each case and disinfection of bedding and clothing carried out in necessitous cases.

Spasmodic outbreaks of Scarlet Fever of a mild type occurred im various parts of the District, which extended throughout the greater part of the year.

MILK AND DAIRIES: Great progress has been made in the raising of the standard of Milk Producers' methods and premises throughout the area.

A great many visits have been paid to Dairy Farms and advice given on the best means of producing a clean and wholesome milk.

Sampling for both cleanliness and the presence of Tubercle Bacilli was carried out at all producer's premises, and action taken where analyses proved faults in production or the presence of Tuberculosis.

This service has been a means of improving milk supplies and of detecting thw presence of cattle suffering from Tuberculosis, a most valuable contribution to safeguarding the health of the public.

HOUSING: Although efforts have been made to have defects remedied to a number of working class dwellings, the general condition of such dwellings continue to deteriorate.

The great problem of bringing a large proportion of dwellings up to a satisfactory standard is one that calls for serious consideration. Many cottages need major repairs, many more are ofnsuch a low standard as to be incapable of being rendered fit for habitation at a reasonable expense.

A number of areas were scheduled for Clearance previous to the outbreak of War, these and other areas should be dealt with as early as possible.

The need for many more working class dwellings is one that must be met to provide the necessary accommodation for families inadequately housed.

A Survey and inspection to cover the whole District will place a great deal of work on the public health department, but it is one that must be undertaker if an accurate statement is to be made of housing conditions.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION: The Council's Scheme for treating children up to the age of 15 years has made further progress during the year under review; at the end of the year 28.24% of children under 5 years of age and 99.80% of children between 5 and 15 years of age had been immunised.

Of the few cases of Diphtheria notified none had been immunised.

Efforts are being continued to obtain a higher percentage of children under 5 years immunised.

Education, Medical and Nursing Services have been most helpful in stressing the need for protecting children against Diphtheria.

MEAT AND OTHER FOODS: Supervision of Food Depots and Shops have continued throughout the year. Examination of meat and other food has entailed many visits to premises, a quantity of meat, tins of foodstuffs in addition to a variety of other foodstuffs were examined, resulting in the condemnation of those affected with disease, or otherwise unwholesome.

The necessary co-operation with the Ministry of Food Salvage Officer in the disposal of condemned foodstuffs has been carried out.

The duties connected with the protection of the public food supply are of the greatest importance, and it is satisfactory to both the Council and their Public Health Officers that the protection of the health of the population of the District has been maintained by the efforts of those Officers engaged in this valuable public service.

G E N E R A L

During the year every assistance has been given to the Military Authorities in connection with drainage, scavenging and water supplies, in fact a spirit of co-operation between the Civil and Military Authorities has been in evidence throughout the whole District.

The requisitioning of properties by the Military Authorities has called for re-housing certain families, accommodation although limited, has been found for displaced families.

We are, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servants,

W. ROYDEN.

J. D. McKELVIE.

Medical Officers of Health.